

## Schuyler assistant DA to testify about sex abuse in Albany

■ Official's personal story may help change statute of limitations.

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A man who was sexually abused by a Catholic priest during the 1960s will speak

before the state Senate on Tuesday about extending the statute of limitations for sex crimes.

Schuyler County Assistant District Attorney John Hayes will speak for 10 minutes in Albany as a victim, an advocate and a prosecutor.

Hayes, of Odessa, was featured in a June Star-Gazette article about his experience of being sexually abused by a priest when he was a boy.

In March, Sen. Thomas K. Duane, D-Manhattan, intro-

duced a bill that would extend the statute of limitations for sex crimes. On Tuesday, it will be discussed in a public forum.

The measure calls for a change in state law to allow child molestation victims to seek criminal prosecution of their abusers for eight years



HAYES

after they turn 18, or up to age 26, if the crime has not been reported previously to police.

"The main thrust of that bill is to let New York recognize the fact that it takes many years for a victim of trauma to come to terms with that," said Mark Furnish, who spoke on behalf of Duane during a telephone interview Friday.

"Victims should be able to have their day in court, and people around the country are starting to realize it's necessary."

Hayes was sexually abused in 1966 while he trained to be an altar boy.

However, he didn't remember the incidents for nearly three decades. Hayes is now 47.

In 1993, Hayes filed a complaint and eventually settled out of court for \$70,000 with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester and the former priest, John Gormley, who admitted abusing Hayes.

Under existing law, Hayes said, "When you remember that the crime was committed

is irrelevant."

In New York, the statute of limitations is three to five years, depending upon the crime and whether it's considered a misdemeanor or a felony, Hayes said.

"It's antiquated," Furnish said. "The existing law doesn't take into consideration how long it takes to come to terms with such trauma."

On the Net: To keep track of the bill, <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/7bnc/s02b16>.